

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1.(Currently Amended) A track tensioning device for an endless track on a vehicle having a track frame, said track tensioning device comprising a roller to engage an interior surface of a track, a track tensioner arm supporting the roller, the track tensioner arm including a tubular slide housing, a spring assembly within the tubular slide housing for urging the roller to provide tension in the track comprising first and second compression springs mounted to be loaded in series, the springs being of substantially different spring rates, a first of the springs having a lower spring rate than a second of the springs, a support on the track frame for slidably guiding the tubular housing, a base plate fixed to an end of the tubular housing adjacent the roller, a slide plate slidably mounted in the tubular housing, the second spring being positioned in the tubular housing between the base plate and the slide plate, a force reaction wall mounted on the track frame spaced from an end of the tubular housing opposite from the base plate, the first spring being mounted between the slide plate and the force reaction wall to react spring force to the force reaction wall, a mechanical stop engaging the slide plate as the first spring is compressed by loads on the track tension arm as the slide housing is forced toward the force reaction wall, to prevent loading the first spring more than a selected amount, and thereafter the second spring being compressed between the end plate and the slide plate by increased loads on the track tensioner arm providing load to resisting movement of the roller and the slide housing toward the force reaction wall caused by tension in the track.

2.(Currently Amended) The track tensioning device of claim 1, wherein the ~~springs are compression springs and said mechanical~~

stop comprises a sleeve on an interior of the first spring, and ~~an end slide plate engaging an end of the second spring,~~ said sleeve having an end surface that bears against the slide plate when the first spring is compressed a selected amount.

3.(Currently Amended) The track tensioning device of claim 1, ~~wherein the first and second springs are compression coil springs, and wherein said second spring is mounted in a spring assembly including an end slide plate on an end of the second spring spaced away from the roller,~~ further comprising a rod mounted in an interior of the first spring and extending slidably through the slide plate, the mechanical stop comprising a sleeve surrounding said rod and positioned on the interior of the first spring, an adjustment nut on the rod bearing against an end of said first spring opposite from the second spring, and said rod being anchored relative to a ~~track frame to provide a reaction force~~ the force reaction wall to react force to the force reaction wall when at least one of the springs areis compressed.

4.(Currently Amended) The track tensioning device of claim ~~3~~1, further comprising ~~wherein said second spring is captured in an assembly including a slide guide and a base plate, said base plate being secured relative to the slide guide, a slide plate at an opposite end of said second spring from said base plate, a pair of guide rods fixed to the base plate and slidably mounted through said slide plate, whereby said slide plate can slide along the guide rods when the second spring compresses, and retainers~~ adjustable stops on said guide rods to pre-load the second spring and hold the slide plate in a position with the second spring under a selected compression.

5.(canceled)

6. (canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) A pretensioned spring track tensioning assembly comprising a tensioner arm for mounting a rotating tension roller for engaging a vehicle drive track, said arm having a slide housing attached thereto and extending in a direction away from the mounting for the roller, the slide housing mounting first and second springs end to end, the first and second springs being and of different spring rates, the second spring having a first end that is anchored relative to the tensioner arm to prevent the second spring from moving toward the mounting for the roller, and the first spring being mounted adjacent an end of said second spring opposite from the first end of the second spring, a slide plate slidably carried by the slide housing between the adjacent ends of the first and second springs, ~~a spring retainer slidably mounted relative to said slide plate and secured relative to the arm when the second spring is in place,~~ a guide fixed to the arm adjacent the first end of the second spring and slidably mounting said slide plate and having ~~retainers~~ adjustable stops thereon to provide for compressing the second spring and retaining the second spring ~~after at a desired compression to a desired position,~~ a reaction member engaging an end of the first spring opposite from the second spring and being adapted to be ~~secured~~ held from axial movement relative to a track frame to react loads on the tensioner arm tending to compress the first and second springs, and a stop member between the reaction member and the slide plate to limit the amount of compression of the first spring when the tensioner arm is loaded in a direction to provide a force against the reaction member.

8. (Previously Presented) The pretensioned spring assembly of claim 7, wherein said reaction member comprises a shaft, said shaft being mounted in the center of said first spring and

slidably extending through said slide plate, and wherein said stop member is carried with said shaft, such that when the first spring has compressed a selected amount the stop member engages the slide plate and further movement of the tensioner arm toward the reaction member loads the second spring through the slide plate and stop member.

9.(Original) The pretensioned spring assembly of claim 8, wherein the reaction member further comprises a nut threadably movable on the shaft, the nut having a flange to engage the first spring.

10.(Original) The pretensioned spring assembly of claim 9, wherein the shaft is rotatably secured to the track frame.

11.(Original) The pretensioned spring assembly of claim 9, wherein the reaction member includes a reaction plate mounted to carry compression loads from the springs to the track frame, the shaft being rotatable relative to the reaction plate.

12.(Original) The pretensioned spring assembly of claim 11 and a lock plate to selectively lock the shaft from rotation relative to the reaction plate.